

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01 OPR-02 CPR-01 /077 W

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R 031040Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1857

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 9261

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PDIP, AFSP,UR

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS CLEARANCE OF DIPLOMATIC MAIL

REF BEIRUT 6006

1. LATEST IN SERIES OF HARASSMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS BY MOSCOW CUSTOMS IN REFUSAL TO PERMIT CLEARANCE 23 POUCHES MARKED "DIPLOMATIC MAIL" FROM AMERICAN EMBASSY BEIRUT. ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR PERSONALLY VISITED CUSTOMS AND WAS PERMITTED TO EXAMINE BAGS AND INVOICE, BUT CUSTOMS INSISTED THAT POUCHES WOULD ONLY BE RELEASED FOLLOWING INSPECTION. CUSTOMS OFFICIAL CITED ONE REASON FOR REFUSAL TO RELEASE WITHOUT INSPECTION STATEMENT ON NURMINEN (FINNISH SHIPPER) INVOICE NO. 149832/BGR THAT TWO CASES AND 23 BAGS WEIGHING 1524 KILOS CONTAINED "PRINTED MATTER." SECOND REASON FOR REFUSAL WAS ABSENCE COURIER LETTER COVERING DIPLOMATIC POUCHES.

2. ADMIN COUNSELOR OFFERED CUSTOMS PERMISSION OPEN TWO CASES INCLUDED ON BILL OF LADING WHICH WERE SIMPLY CONSIGNED TO AMERICAN EMBASSY MOSCOW BUT NOT MARKED "DIPLOMATIC MAIL" NOR ENCLOSED IN POUCHES. CUSTOMS
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REFUSED THIS OFFER AND INSISTED ON INSPECTING ENTIRE

SHIPMENT.

3. ADMIN COUNSELOR THEN CALLED ANTIPOV, COUNSELOR MFA USA DIVISION, REPORTING INCIDENT. ANTIPOV SAID HE WOULD REPORT INCIDENT TO KORNIYENKO AND URGED CALL BE MADE TO FILATOV OR PASHIN IN PROTOCOL. ADMIN COUNSELOR EXPLAINED CALLS TO THEM IN PAST HAD NOT BEEN PRODUCTIVE, WHEREUPON ANTIPOV SUGGESTED CALL TO BORUNKOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL. WHEN CALL PLACED TO BORUNKOV, EMBASSY OPERATOR WAS ADVISED BORUNKOV NOT AVAILABLE.

4. LIST OF NUMBERS OF POUCHES MARKED "DIPLOMATIC MAIL" FROM AMERICAN EMBASSY, BEIRUT FOLLOWS:
DIPLOMATIC MAIL - BEIRUT

X3-1450
X3-24395
X3-4595
/3-17438
X3-2702
X2-16377
X3-23094
X3-17438
X3-25094
X3-2426
X2-15966
X3-10393
/3-26041
X2-17015
X-3-4470
X3-5497
X3-15050
X3-17730
X2-19803
X3-13037
X3-26160
X2-16377
X3-15648

5. ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR SUBSEQUENTLY WAS IN TOUCH WITH DEPUTY CHIEF MFA USA DIVISION FEDOZEYEV TO ASK THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOMETHING BE DONE TO RESOLVE THIS SITUATION. FEDOSEYEV TOLD US JUNE 30 THAT HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH CUSTOMS OFFICIALS ON THIS AND THAT WE SHOULD BE GETTING ANSWER JULY 1.

6. POUCHES SEEM TO CONTAIN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE VERSION OF DIALOGUE MAGAZINE (REFTEL) AND IT WOULD THEREFORE PRESENT NO PROBLEM TO US TO OPEN THEM FOR INSPECTION. HOWEVER, PRINCIPLE IS IMPORTANT AND WE DO NOT FEEL WE SHOULD PERMIT

OVERT INSPECTION OF POUCHES MARKED "DIPLOMATIC MAIL"
WITHOUT RAISING THIS MATTER AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL WITH
SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND INDICATING THAT RECIPROCAL
ACTION BEING CONSIDERED. IN ANY CASE EVEN IF SOVIETS EVENTUALLY
BACK OFF ON THIS SUGGEST THAT MATTER BE RAISED WITH SOVIETS IN
WASHINGTON AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL AS EXAMPLE OF TYPE OF CUSTOMS
HARASSMENT WHICH CAN ONLY BE UNPRODUCTIVE FOR BOTH SIDES.
STOESSEL

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